

Planning Fact Sheet 15



What are referrals?

External Referrals

Some developments are in locations or involve activities that require the application to be sent to government agencies or other bodies - this is called a Referral. Referrals are required when the development proposed may impact on or may be affected by services or matters that other authorities have control over or an interest in. Referrals typically relate to important matters that have a broader impact on the health and safety of the community and the environment. Referrals are set out in the Development Regulations and require the applicant to pay additional fees for Council to send the application on for a referral. Referrals inform and in some cases, direct the assessment and outcome of the development application.

External referrals are made to a range of organisations. The organisation that the application is referred to will depend on the type of issue. It is possible for the application to have to go to more than one organisation for referral. Some examples of organisations and the issues they consider are:

- Department of Environment, Natural and Water Resources for River Murray issues;
- Commissioner of Highways (Department for Planning, Transport and Infrastructure) for development on main roads;
- Environmental Protection Agency for development that needs careful consideration of the potential environmental impacts;

- Country Fire Service for new dwellings or dwelling alterations in bushfire prone areas; and

If your development application is required to be referred, the assessment process for the application will take approximately 6 to 10 weeks longer than an application with no referrals.

Internal Referrals

In the assessment process the Planning Officer may make internal referrals to Council's various departments such as infrastructure and health. Internal referrals will generally be undertaken if the proposed development affects, or may be affected by, Council activities and infrastructure such as street trees and driveway placement, or if the development may have flooding issues or impact on heritage properties. These referrals do not require additional fees but are an important part of the assessment of the application.

Why does Council consider issues like Stormwater and bushfire risk?

Referrals are made on a range of issues where the health and safety of the occupants, environment and structures may be at risk, or where the development itself may potentially put the surrounding area at risk

Some of these risks include bushfires and in order to assess bushfire danger Council will refer an application to the Country Fire

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Service. This is to ensure that a dwelling is not built in areas where the risk of bushfire is too high and what measures need to be taken to reduce the risk, including re-siting the dwelling.

Stormwater is considered by Council to ensure that the water is safely disposed of. Issues can arise between neighbours if stormwater is flowing from one house into their neighbour's yard, causing damage to property. Also, if stormwater is not properly managed it can harm your own property, for example the water may get under your house and damage your foundations.

As a result of referrals, public notification or detailed requirements sought during assessment, the Council may seek further information from the applicant. The Council can specify the time offered to provide this information. This information is sought to enable the Council to better understand your application and increases its chances of being approved. If you choose not to provide the information, or do not do so within the relevant timeframe, the Council may refuse the application.

Further Information

The above information is advisory and only a guide to give you a general understanding of the key issues associated with planning. For further information or assistance, please contact Council's Development Department on 8539 1414 or planning@murraybridge.sa.gov.au